To R. D. Webb

Phil[a] Dec 19th
1861

My dear friend

142 I just from the way
the English have brought me
by the last steamer, a man be-
tween you country and mine
is intolerable. our hope is that pub.
opinion & further advi
ces on the vexed and vexing Ques-
tion will have modified the obstinacy
you have produced, as toward
us, a better mind. If reason is
allowed to settle the differences be-
tween us there will be no war.
If England does not want war
there will be no war. If there
should be war between us, it will
not be because we desire war.
Of course neither nation wants war,
in the abstract. Both are sincere in
advocating it as one of the greatest
evils that can befal a nation. But it
might be that one or the other or both
might think that all things consid
ered, and under the present circum

85A

Hence the weight would exceed the harm and that therefore the cabinet might wisely be invited. It is possible that this may be the view the English - that is there also control in England, take of this matter. We learned by most & feared by all in this country that this is the view which prevails there in political circles, assuming this war is undertaken; excluding at least war is not within the range of probabilities. This country wants no war with England. To drive such a man as ~~on~~ Lincoln out would be a naked attempt. I see that some of your newspapers writers affect to think that this movement is coming a quarrel with you. This is simply impossible. Your well informed statesmen & politicians know better. They understand how to discriminate between the bravado of demagogues & the utterances of responsible and leading men. They know that the measures & threats & orders of cabinet councils are not necessarily ~~minatory~~ menacing because they can be made & are made by designing rebels, & mean that

appearance. We know that as in England known, whatever may be the case with the people, that the Government will make every exertion possible for one nation to make a quarrel with another, rather than go to war at the present with England. We certainly have no reason to suppose, in case which the Government will have to settle.

Our amazement at the declarations made, or which have been made, on your side is indescribable. When, years ago, the Legislature boasted that they would have England's property & support, in their projected Government, we laughed at them; when since then they have planned in the dark & carried they have declared from England, and by repeated threatening & insolency of their followers that they were but an earnest of better things to come, we still cherished them under the delusion that England may not side with us, but you never can favour this piratical rebellion. When you ordered us to the Government to work to their cost defiance, we

said "what does the attitude of Germany mean? He is evidently suspicious. He is not suspicious." When he! the capture of the two leading Alabama holding communications on their errand of piracy, made a explosion of feeling in the part of English people and a development of sympathy on the side of the English government which for a time to justify the cordiality of the Confederate and the pro-German policy of the Secretary of State. The flagging spirits of the Alabama builders & fitters-out of the South & their villainous in the North are revived, and we hear a yell of joy from all parts of Secessia. The revulsion of feeling among the public, & the people, and Parliament, & among all women & children, can better be imagined than described. We absolutely had held out & the last. We is true we were disappointed at your reception of the news of our great victory, it is true that we heard afterwards in the "wounded feelings" expressed & openly by Mr Gladstone, & treated at so brutally by our literary dilettanti; but we still loved & admired and believed in England. But the last news staggers us. We can't easily rally under

it. We say: "It can't all be true; it must be pretty exaggerated; it's just an effervescence. The Indians are not rightly informed. When they hear the whole story, point by point, their feelings will change. The English are not a people to act in a passion, or to move precipitately. Their better judgment will assure them that a war with this country, much as it would injure my world, injures them still more!" Still after all we are afraid. It is with nations as it is with individuals; passion often stifles the voice of reason, and the dearest connections are too often broken by it. But we will not believe that there is such a war between the two countries. There is only one thing that could reconcile my world to such a catastrophe, and that is a conviction that such a war was a sequence, unavoidable by any attitude we have taken towards the shareholders. If it were such in the fact then I say to you in all candor, the feeling would be absolutely unanimous; let

let it come!'

Some of our dear Aunt's many friends on this side are in a state of mind which I hardly know how to characterize. Take Miss Estlin for instance. Sure sufficient in Canada, misfortune, Aunt Mary's fidelity and everything that is good I doubt know. She writes to Miss Peyton that none of our speakers or writers give her more satisfaction in their utterances (I quote her thought as nearly as I can, not her words) than Parker Pillsbury. Now the chief characteristic of Mr Pillsbury's publications, as we notice them, are censures of our government & people and bitterness of evil from the course they are pursuing. These may not be the features which arrest the chief attention on this side. Miss E. adds that Mrs Nichols & Miss Wigham, agree with her in their estimate of Mr Pillsbury's talents. Can it be that these noble, pure model good ladies are incapable to discriminate in such a state of

and between England and
this country that story by drawn
pictures of an unnatural unequal
by and dark futurity will be
come as the circumstances are more
agreeable to them, than the intro-
mation of Mrs Howe, or Mr Lan-
sing or Mr Phillips that Eng-
land has by her fraud in the sup-
port of the present causes of
the misfortune country. I
am free to say that I regard
the broad pictures which Mr
Pitt has drawn of the
abounding sin & failing
virtue of this country as
greatly overdrawn. They are
calculated to convey wrong
impressions respecting to be
made in your country, by
persons of pious views.

You have seem to have
lost their hearts in the de-
mands made by this country.
They have claimed from an
equitable, and this

work to [illegible] than expectation confirmed. We abolitionists originally demanded and labored to effect the abolition of slavery in the whole country. After laboring unsuccessfully for [illegible] 12 years we then demanded disunion; first that we might be emancipated from participancy in the evil, and second as a preliminary to general abolition which we believed would follow. We never expected anything but temporary disunion. We knew that Secession would cause, then abolition, and then we supposed re-union. But we are having all three together. The Secessionists favor us. We shall have what we originally asked for - the total abolition of slavery in these United States; and we shall have it, the Eastern hell of fire!

But I must stop. My eyes are smarting, and I must not overtask them. - God bless my dear friend. God keep you! I love you all

– Give my love & family, Miss Estlin, Miss Wigham, Mrs Edmundson, and all "Bristol ens" as you see the same as ever. I evince my love in the frankness with which I write about matters which, between friend & friend & one X is dangerous to talk about.

I like the last Advocate. It had a very Pennsylvania look. Your compliment to us almost reconciles us to the absence in that & all former numbers of all practising criticism of the acts & writings of those of those of you here who are favouring the Cause of the Slaveholders. You have a Caustic pen, as the readers of our pieces & particularly & even the Rhetoric of our President can testify;

how you might make the
best fly if you would try it on
some of the priests, politicians
journalists & Cabinet Ministers
in your side the water.
But hush-sh, that would
not be good policy. Perhaps
you are mistaken in thinking
that you have among these
clans any that deserve it.
Well, you should know best.
I have great faith in your
judgment as well as in your
perfect confidence in your
friends. You are my
model man in the "fast
anchored"; if you fail me,
I hardly know what
would follow. — The Fair
is in full blast. The "English
Lions" won't sell; except
"John Brown" which goes off
like hot cakes"
Yours Ever & Ever
B. W. McCann